

To their immense credit, noncommercial radio, and occasional newspaper reports, did provide some broader perspectives, but the monolithic power and domination of television made those voices, in those media, less significant than they should have been.

Television was essentially an instrument of official policy during the first weeks of the war. It adopted the role of cheerleader for the military-government viewpoint. The high point was probably the 1991 Super Bowl, which was indistinguishable from a multimedia pro-war extravaganza. The fans were shown waving American flags while sitting on red, white, and blue cushions. The players and coaches were interviewed about their hopes for our side in the larger game of war. The halftime show was a patriotic Disney display of the superiority of American values. And there were several intercuts to George and Barbara Bush, watching the game at home, and speaking to us about how their thoughts, like ours, were on the righteousness of our "just cause" in the Persian Gulf. And then, Peter Jennings showed us—oh no!—*those videos*.

Now it was time for television to really strut its stuff. The video images of the laser- and radar-guided missiles striking their targets with precision were made-in-heaven for television. It brought us, the viewers, into the cockpit of the plane; we could see the same screen the pilot saw. It demonstrated the unique artistic capability of the medium, equal to its delivery of multifaceted and multidimensional advertising imagery.

The laser-bomb images also revealed the natural symbiosis among video, computer, broadcast satellite, radar, and laser technologies, which stimulated 100 million people to glory in the miraculous technical superiority of our society. No other medium had ever been able to create such a brilliant advertisement, and instill such awe, for technology itself.

Of course, this so-called war footage that we were seeing—virtually the only war footage we saw during those first three weeks—had a familiar look to it. It was precisely the kind of imagery we had been trained to accept and to love, from a decade of playing video games. When Mr. Reagan said that video games were good training for bomber pilots, he failed to mention that it was also good training for *us*; it enabled us to truly identify with the bomber pilots, and brought us closer to them.

That the two sources of imagery—video games and war—became intertwined in our minds, and that the war itself became something of a giant video game, was so apparent that it was even noted by mass media pundits. What was not sufficiently noted was how amazingly odd this was.

I have described how Ronald Reagan had become a human presidential replay of previously implanted film and TV imagery. The images of high-

tech war were also produced an instantly utterly unprecedented all our favorite games—had merged right up there with

Nonetheless, the video-game wars that was not merely experience.

Psychologist Robert of high-technology of our acts. It palled at the continuing often acts impersonal collaboration and participate in the actually experiencing we like them. We it, but are numb to it brings us pleasure

Finally what is amazing efficiency already observed by corporations, which determined fashion the corporate role: their commercials issues to take center stages ultimately symbiosis.

The main point vision in influencing from any premeditation does from a *de facto* computers, TV technology instrument of central

The factors that TV's incredible reach home in the world

tech war were also replays of previously implanted video imagery. They produced an instant hit of recognition, familiarity, and support for this utterly unprecedented technological merger. It was so neat, somehow, that all our favorite toys—computers, television, video games, and war games—had merged this way into something we could all experience right up there with our real pilots.

Nonetheless, there remained one area of confusion. For unlike the video-game wars in video parlors, the actual bombs had a final outcome that was not merely electronic: It was metal against flesh. This we did not experience.

Psychologist Robert Jay Lifton has written eloquently about the effects of high-technology warfare, which distances our society from the awareness of our acts. He calls it "psychic numbing." Our society remains appalled at the continuous acts of violence on our streets, where a killer so often acts impersonally, without feeling. And yet, says Lifton, through the collaboration and merging of the new technologies into TV imagery, we participate in the acts of violence performed by our military without actually experiencing them. And rather than being appalled by these acts, we like them. We are thrilled and excited by "the kill," as our military puts it, but are numb to the death that is involved. Rather than bringing us pain, it brings us pleasure. (The same is also true of the actual killers, the pilots.)

Finally what is revealed by television's performance in the war is its amazing efficiency when controlled by central authority. Of course we've already observed that efficiency over the last decades of television's control by corporations, which also train the population to view reality in a predetermined fashion, while minimizing alternative views. In times of war, the corporate role recedes temporarily. In fact, many advertisers withdrew their commercials for a time when war broke out, allowing the military issues to take center stage. Anyway, the celebration of high-tech war images ultimately supports corporate goals, which makes another neat symbiosis.

The main point to understand in all this is that the efficiency of television in influencing and controlling the populace does not result so much from any premeditated conspiracy by the military or corporations as it does from a *de facto* conspiracy of technical factors. As is the case with computers, TV technology is more efficient and more effective as an instrument of centralized control than it is for any other use.

The factors that conspire to create this inevitable condition include TV's incredible reach into every home in the country, and someday, every home in the world, combined with the power of the imagery it places in

our brains. In addition, in more individual terms, it encourages passivity, isolation, confusion, addiction, and alienation; it homogenizes values and shuts out alternative visions.

Television is uniquely suited to implant and continuously reinforce dominant ideologies. And, while it hones our minds, it also accelerates our nervous systems into a form that matches the technological reality that is upon us. Television effectively produces a new form of human being—less creative, less able to make subtle distinctions, speedier, and more interested in *things*—albeit better able to handle, appreciate, and approve of the new technological world. High-speed computers, faxes, lasers, satellites, robotics, high-tech war, space travel, and the further suppression of nature are more palatable and desirable for us because of our involvement with TV. The ultimate result, in high-tech terms, is that television redesigns us to be compatible with the future.

TEL SATEL CLONII

The C

IF THERE IS a basic p
is good. Beyond good
to survive. Writers such
have reported on the d
which threatens to colla
biological health. Techn
ments: for example, the
ness, in lieu of diverse m
the unimaginably comp
But the idea that comm
have a role in destroying

By its ability to impl
people, TV can homoge
to make them resemble
the imagery. In our wor
whose ideal of life is te
terialistic, and hostile to

YOU MAY
USE ANY OR
ALL OF THIS -
Jeff Coykendall
5-9-93

93-48

Jeff Coykendall
447 Pinehurst 2
Los Gatos CA

95032

Jan 23, 1993

RECEIVED

MAY 15 1993

FCC MAIL ROOM

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Dear Abby:

Enclosed you will find a photocopy of the back of HASBRO's Battle Troll toy.

I was watching saturday morning cartoons recently, and saw those loveable little Troll dolls romping near a castle. All of a sudden, the drawbridge slams down, flattening a troll. And, out marched the most sterotypical/marketing department-created repulsive things since Garbage Pail Kids!

I have long held the theory that toys - along with video games - are a subliminal attempt to program the youth of America (and, the world) for violence, mayhem, sexual stereotyping, and aggressive behavior. Behavior that is spawned for the youth sports playing field... but storms right into the classrooms and homes/neighborhoods nationwide.

When I asked a marketing maven in the toy business about this, she told me that millions of dollars are spent by companies on research and interviews to find what kids "want" and

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

RECEIVED

MAY 13 1993

FCC - MAIL ROOM

140 Jade Lane
Paradise, CA 95969
May 10, 1993

Children's TV MM Docket #93-48
Federal Communications Commission
Room 222, 1919 M Street NW
Washington D.C. 20554

Dear Secretary:

I would just like to voice my concern about the programs and commercials children are apt to view these days. The sex, violence, and all around trash broadcasted or cabled is a waste.

Television could be such an invaluable asset for America's young. It could be a tool of inspiration and a source of knowledge for the problem solvers of tomorrow's complex world.

Please let us encourage responsible broadcasting! If there is anything I can do to help motivate a positive trend in television, please write at the above address.

Sincerely,


Karen Ramsay

No. of Copies rec'd 0
List A B C D E

RECEIVED

MAY 13 1993

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY